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T H E
D R U M M E R ;

O R, T H E
H A U N T E D H O U S E .

A
C O M E D Y .

By the late Right Honourable

J O S E P H A D D I S O N , E s q ;

——Falsis terroribus implet

Ut Magus——

H O R .

L O N D O N ,

Printed for M. DODSLEY in Pall-mall, and D.
COOPER, in the Strand. M D C C L X V .





T H E

P R E F A C E.

HAVING recommended this play to the town, and delivered the copy of it to the bookseller, I think myself obliged to give some account of it.

It had been some years in the hands of the author, and falling under my perusal, I thought so well of it, that I persuaded him to make some additions and alterations to it, and let it appear upon the stage. I own I was very highly pleased with it, and liked it the better, for the want of those studied similes and repartees which we who have writ before him have thrown into our plays, to indulge and gain upon a false taste that has prevailed for many years in the British Theatre. I believe the author would have condescended to fall into this way a little more than he has, had he before the writing of it been often present at theatrical representations. I was confirmed in my thoughts of the play, by the opinion of better judges to whom it was communicated, who observed

that the scenes were drawn after Moliere's manner, and that an easy and natural vein of humour ran through the whole.

I do not question but the reader will discover this, and see many beauties that escaped the audience; the touches being too delicate for every taste in a popular assembly. My brother-sharers were of opinion, at the first reading of it, that it was like a picture in which the strokes were not strong enough to appear at a distance. As it is not in the common way of writing, the approbation was at first doubtful, but has risen every time it has been acted, and has given an opportunity in several of its parts for as just and good action as ever I saw on the stage.

The reader will consider that I speak here, not as the author, but as the patentee. Which is, perhaps, the reason why I am not diffuse in the praises of the play, lest I should seem like a man who cries up his own wares only to draw in customers.

RICHARD STEELE.

P R O-

P R O L O G U E.

IN this grave age, when comedies are few,
 We crave your patronage for one that's new;
 Though 'twere poor stuff, yet bid the author fair,
 And let the scarceness recommend the ware.
 Long have your ears been fill'd with tragic parts,
 Blood and blank verse have harden'd all your hearts;
 If e'er you smile 'tis at some party strokes,
 Round heads and wooden shoes are standing jokes;
 The same conceit gives claps and hisses birth,
 You're grown such politicians in your mirth!
 For once we try (though 'tis I own unsafe,)
 To please you all, and make both parties laugh.

Our author, anxious for his fame to night,
 And bashful in his first attempt to write,
 Lies cautiously obscure and unreveal'd,
 Like antient actors in a mask conceal'd,
 Censure, when no man knows who writes the play,
 Were much good malice merely thrown away.
 The mighty critics, will not blast, for shame,
 A raw young thing, who dares not tell his name:
 Good-natur'd judges will th' unknown defend,
 And fear to blame, lest they should hurt a friend:
 Each wit may praise it, for his own dear sake,
 And hint he writ it, if the thing should take.
 But if you're rough, and use him like a dog,
 Depend upon it—he'll remain incog.
 If you should hiss, he swears he'll hiss as high,
 And, like a culprit, join the hue-and-cry.

If cruel men are still averse to spare
 These scenes, they fly for refuge to the fair.
 Though with a ghost our comedy be heighten'd,
 Ladies, upon my word, you shan't be frighten'd;
 O, 'tis a ghost that scorns to be uncivil;
 A well-spread, lusty, jointure-hunting devil;
 An am'rous ghost, that's faithful, fond and true,
 Made of flesh and blood—as much as you.
 Then every evening come in flocks, undaunted,
 We never think this house is too much haunted.

Dramatis Personæ.

Sir George Trueman,
Tinfel,
Fantome, the Drummer,
Vellum, Sir George's steward,
Butler,
Coachman,
Gardiner,

Lady Trueman,
Abigail,

Mr Wilks.
Mr Cibber.
Mr Mills.
Mr Johnson.
Mr Penkethman.
Mr Miller.
Mr Norris.

Mrs Oldfield.
Mrs Saunders.

T H E

THE
D R U M M E R ;
OR THE
HAUNTED-HOUSE.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

A. Great Hall.

Enter the Butler, Coachman, and Gardiner.

Butl. **T**H E R E came another coach to town last night, that brought a gentleman to enquire about this strange noise, we hear in the house. This spirit will bring a power of custom to the George——If so be he continues his pranks, I design to sell a pot of ale, and set up the sign of the drum.

Coachm. I'll give Madam warning that's flat—I've always liv'd in sober families. I'll not disparage myself to be a servant in a house that is haunted.

Gard. I'll e'en marry Nell, and rent a bit of ground of my own, if both of you leave Madam; not but that Madam's a very good woman——If Mrs Abigail did not spoil her——come, here's her health.

Butl. It's a very hard thing to be a butler in a house that is disturb'd. He made such a racket in the cellar last night, that I'm afraid he'll four all the beer in my barrels.

Coachm. Why then, John, we ought to take it off as fast as we can, here's to you—he rattled so loud under the tiles last night, that I verily thought the house wou'd have fallen over our heads. I durst not go up into the cock loft this morning, if I had not got one of the maids to go along with me.

Gard. I thought I heard him in one of my bed-posts—I marvel, John, how he gets into the house when all the gates are shut.

Butl. Why look ye, Peter, your spirit will creep you
into

into an augre-hole : he'll whisk you through a key-hole, without so much as jussling against one of the wards.

Coachm. Poor Madam is mainly frighted, that's certain, and verily believes 'tis my master that was kill'd in the last campaign.

Butl. Out of all manner of question, Robin, 'tis Sir George. Mrs Abigail is of opinion it can be none but his Honour ; he always lov'd the wars, and you know was mightily pleas'd from a child with the music of a drum.

Gard. I wonder his body was never found after the battle.

Butl. Found ! Why, you fool, is not his body here about the house ? Dost thou think he can beat his drum without hands and arms ?

Coachm. 'Tis master as sure as I stand here alive, and I verily believe I saw him last night in the town-closet.

Gard. Ay ! how did he appear ?

Coachm. Like a white horse.

Butl. Pho, Robin, I tell ye he has never appear'd yet but in the shape of the sound of a drum.

Coachm. This makes one almost afraid of one's own shadow. As I was walking from the stable t'other night without my lanthorn, I fell a cross a beam, that lay in my way, and faith my heart was in my mouth——I thought I had stumbled over a spirit.

Butl. Thou might'st as well have stumbled over a straw ; why, a spirit is such a little little thing, that I have heard a man, who was a great scholar, say, that he'll dance a Lancashire horn pipe upon the point of a needle——As I sat in the pantry last night counting my spoons, the candle methought burnt blue, and the spay'd bitch look'd as if she saw something.

Coachm. Ay, poor cur, she's almost frighten'd out of her wits.

Gard. Ay, I warrant ye, she hears him many a time and often when we don't.

Butl. My Lady must have him laid, that's certain, whatever it cost her.

Gard. I fancy when one goes to market, one might hear of some body that can make a spell.

Coachm. Why, may not the parson of our parish lay him ?

Butl.

Butl. No, no, no, our parson cannot lay him.

Coachm. Why not he as well as another man?

Butl. Why, ye fool, he is not qualified—he has not taken the oaths.

Gard. Why d'ye think John, that the spirit wou'd take the law of him—faith, I could tell you one way to drive him off.

Coachm. How's that?

Gard. I'll tell you immediately [*drinks*]*—*I fancy Mrs Abigail might scold him out of the house.

Coachm. Ay, she has a tongue that would drown his drum if any thing cou'd.

Butl. Pugh, this is all froth! you understand nothing of the matter—the next time it makes a noise, I'll tell you what ought to be done—I wou'd have the steward speak Latin to it.

Coachm. Ay, that wou'd do, if the steward had but courage.

Gard. There you have it—He's a fearful man. If I had as much learning as he, and I met the ghost, I'd tell him his own! but alack what can one of us poor men do with a spirit, that can neither write nor read?

Butl. Thou art always cracking and boasting, Peter; thou dost not know what mischief it might do thee, if such a silly dog as thee should offer to speak to it. For ought I know, he might flea thee alive, and make parchment of thy skin to cover his drum with.

Gard. A fiddle stick! tell not me—I fear nothing; not I! I never did harm in my life, I never committed murder.

Butl. I verily believe thee, keep thy temper, Peter; after supper we'll drink each of us a double mug, and then let come what will.

Gard. Why that's well said, John, an honest man that is not quite sober, has nothing to fear—Here's to ye—why how if he shou'd come this minute, here wou'd I stand. Ha! what noise is that?

Butl. and *Coachm.* Ha! where!

Gard. The devil! the devil! Oh no, 'tis Mrs Abigail.

Butl. Ay, faith! 'tis she; 'tis Mrs Abigail! a good mistake! 'tis Mrs Abigail.

Enter.

Enter Abigal.

Abig. Here are your drunken sots for you! Is this a time to be a guzzling, when gentry are come to the house! why don't you lay your cloth? How come you out of the stables? Why are not you at work in your garden?

Gard. Why, yonder's the fine Londoner and Madam fetching a walk together, and methought they look'd as if they should say they had rather have my room than my company.

Bull. And so forsooth being all three met together, we are doing our endeavours to drink this same drummer out of our heads.

Gard. For you must know, Mrs Abigal, we are all of opinion that one can't be a match for him, unless one be as drunk as a drum.

Coachm. I am resolv'd to give Madam warning to hire herself another coachman; for I came to serve my master, d'ye see, while he was alive, but do suppose that he has no farther occasion for a coach, now he walks.

Bull. Truly, Mrs Abigal, I must needs say, that this same spirit is a very odd sort of a body, after all, to fright Madam and his old servants at this rate.

Gard. And truly, Mrs Abigal, I must needs say, I serv'd my master contentedly, while he was living; but I will serve no man living, (that is, no man that is not living) without double wages.

Abig. Ay, 'tis such cowards as you that go about with idle stories to disgrace the house, and bring so many strangers about it; you first frighten yourselves, and then your neighbours.

Gard. Frighten'd? I scorn your words. Frighten'd quoth-a!

Abig. What you sot! are you grown pot-valiant?

Gard. Frighten'd with a drum! that's a good one! 'twill do us no harm, I'll answer for it. It will bring no bloodshed along with it, take my word. It sounds as like a train band drum as ever I heard in my life.

Bull. Pr'ythee, Peter, don't be so presumptuous.

Abig. Well, these drunken rogues take it as I could wish.

[*Aside.*
Gard.

Gard. I scorn to be frightned, now I'm in for't! if old dub-a-bub should come into the room, I wou'd take him——

Butl. Pr'ythee hold thy tongue.

Gard. I wou'd take him.—

[*The drum beats, the gardiner endeavours to get off, and falls.*]

Butl. and *Coachm.* Speak to it, Mrs Abigal.

Gard. Spare my life, and take all I have.

Coachm. Make off, make off, good butler, and let us go hide ourselves in the cellar. [*They all run off.*]

Abigal sola.

Abig. So, now the coast is clear, I may venture to call out my drummer—But first let me shut the door, lest we be surprized. Mr Fantome! Mr Fantome! [*He beats.*] Nay, nay, pray come out, the enemy's fled—I must speak with you immediately—don't stay to beat a parley.

[*The back scene opens and discovers Fantome with a drum.*]

Fant. Dear Mrs Nabby, I have overheard all that has been said, and find thou hast managed this thing so well, that I cou'd take thee in my arms, and kifs thee—if my drum did not stand in my way.

Abig. Well, O' my conscience, you are the merriest ghost! and the very picture of Sir George Trueman.

Fant. There you flatter me, Mrs Abigal: Sir George had that freshness in his looks, that we men of the town cannot come up to.

Abig. Oh! death may have alter'd you, you know—besides, you must consider, you lost a great deal of blood in the battle.

Fant. Ay, that's right; let me look never so pale, this cut cross my forehead will keep me in countenance.

Abig. 'Tis just such a one as my master receiv'd from a cursed French trooper, as my Lady's letter inform'd her.

Fant. It happens luckily that this suit of cloaths of Sir George's fits me so well: I think—I can't fail hitting the air of a man with whom I was so long acquainted.

Abig.

Abig. You are the very man—I vow I almost start when I look upon you.

Fant But what good will this do me, if I must remain invisible?

Abig. Pray what good did your being visible do you? The fair Mr Fantome thought no woman cou'd withstand him.—but when you were seen by my lady in your proper person, after she had taken a full survey of you, and heard all the pretty things you cou'd say, she very civilly dismiss'd you for the sake of this empty, noisy creature Tinsel. She fancies you have been gone from hence this fortnight.

Fant. Why really I love thy Lady so well, that tho' I had no hopes of gaining her for myself, I cou'd not bear to see her given to another, especially such a wretch as Tinsel.

Abig. Well, tell me truly, Mr Fantome, have you not a great opinion of my fidelity to my dear Lady, that I would not suffer her to be deluded in this manner, for less than a thousand pound?

Fant. Thou art always remembering me of my promise—thou shalt have it, if thou canst bring our project to bear; dost not know that stories of ghosts and apparitions generally end in a pot of money.

Abig. Why, truly now Mr Fantome, I should think myself a very bad woman, if I had done what I do, for a farthing less.

Fant. Dear Abigal, how I admire thy virtue!

Abig. No, no, Mr Fantome, I defy the world of my enemies to say I love mischief for mischief's sake.

Fant. But is thy Lady persuaded that I am the ghost of her deceased husband?

Abig. I endeavour to make her believe so, and tell her every time your drum rattles, that her husband is chiding her for entertaining this new love.

Fant. Pry'thee make use of all thy art, for I am tir'd to death with strowling round this wide old house, like a rat behind a wainscot.

Abig. Did not I tell you, 'twas the purest place in the world for you to play your tricks in? there's none of the family that knows every hole and corner in it, besides myself.

Fant.

Fant. Ah Mrs Abigail! you have had your intrigues.

Abig. For you must know, when I was a romping young girl, I was a mighty lover of *hide and seek*.

Fant. I believe, by this time, I am as well acquainted with the house as yourself.

Abig. You are very much mistaken, Mr Fantome; but no matter for that; here is to be your station to night. This is a place unknown to any one living besides myself, since the death of the joiner; who, you must understand, being a lover of mine, contrived the wainscot to move to and fro, in the manner that you find it. I design'd it for a wardrobe for my Lady's cast cloaths. Oh! the stomachers, stays, petticoats, commodes, laced shoes, and good things that I have had in it—pray take care you don't break the cherry-brandy bottle that stands up in the corner.

Fant. Well, Mrs Abigail, I hire your closet of you but for this one night—a thousand pound you know is a very good rent.

Abig. Well, get you gone; you have such a way with you, there's no denying you any thing!

Fant. I'm a thinking how Tinsel will stare when he sees me come out of the wall: for I'm resolv'd to make my appearance to night.

Abig. Get you in; get you in, my Lady's at the door.

Fant. Pray take care she does not keep me up so late as she did last night, or depend upon it I'll beat the Tadoo.

Abig. I'm undone! I'm undone—[*As he is going in.*] Mr Fantome, Mr Fantome, you have put the thousand pound bond into my brother's hands.

Fant. Thou shalt have it, I tell thee, thou shalt have it. [*Fantome goes in.*]

Abig. No more words—vanish, vanish.

Enter Lady.

Abig. [*opening the door.*] Oh, dear Madam, was it you that made such a knocking? my heart does so beat—I vow you have frightened me to death—I thought verily it had been the drummer.

Lady. I have been showing the garden to Mr Tinsel; he's

he's most insufferably witty upon us about the story of the dram.

Abig. Indeed, Madam, he's a very loose man! I'm afraid 'tis he that hinders my poor master from resting in his grave.

Lady. Well! an infidel is such a novelty in the country, that I am resolv'd to divert myself a day or two at least with the oddness of his conversation.

Abig. Ah, Madam! the drum began to beat in the house as soon as ever this creature was admitted to visit you. All the while Mr Fantome made his addressee to you, there was not a mouse stirring in the family more than used to be.

Lady. This baggage has some design upon me, more than I can yet discover. [*aside.*]—Mr Fantome was always thy favourite.

Abig. Ay, and should have been yours too, by my consent! Mr Fantome was not such a slight fantastic thing as this is.—Mr Fantome was the best built man one shou'd see in a summer's day! Mr Fantome was a man of honour, and lov'd you! poor soul! how he sigh'd when he has talked to me of my hard-hearted lady—Well! I had as lief as a thousand pounds you would marry Mr Fantome!

Lady. To tell thee truly, I lov'd him well enough till I found he lov'd me so much. But Mr Tinsel makes his court to me with so much neglect and indifference, and with such an agreeable sauciness—not that I say I'll marry him.

Abig. Marry him, quoth a! no, if you should, you'll be awaken'd sooner than married couples generally are—you'll quickly have a drum at your window.

Lady. I'll hide my contempt of Tinsel, for once, if it be but to see what this wench drives at. [*aside.*]

Abig. Why, suppose your husband, after this fair warning he has given you, shou'd sound you an alarm at midnight; then open your curtains with a face as pale as my apron, and cry out with a hollow voice, what dost thou do in bed with this spindle shanked fellow?

Lady. Why wilt thou needs have it to be my husband? he never had any reason to be offended at me. I always

ways lov'd him while he was living, and should prefer him to any man, were he so still. Mr Tinsel is indeed very idle in his talk, but I fancy, Abigail, a discreet woman might reform him.

Abig. That's a likely matter indeed? did you ever hear of a woman who had power over a man when she was his wife, that had none while she was his mistress! oh! there's nothing in the world improves a man in his complaisance like marriage!

Lady. He is indeed, at present, too familiar in his conversation.

Abig. Familiar! Madam, in troth, he's downright rude.

Lady. But that you know, Abigail, shows he has no dissimulation in him——then he is apt to jest a little too much upon grave subjects.

Abig. Grave subjects! he jests upon the church.

Lady. But that you know, Abigail, may be only to shew his wit——then it must be own'd he's extremely talkative.

Abig. Talkative d'ye call it! he's downright impertinent.

Lady. But that you know, Abigail, is a sign he has been us'd to good company——then indeed he is very positive.

Abig. Positive! why he contradicts you in every thing you say.

Lady. But then you know, Abigail, he has been educated at the Inns of Court.

Abig. A blessed education indeed! it has made him forget his catechism!

Lady. You talk as if you hated him.

Abig. You talk as if you lov'd him.

Lady. Hold your tongue! here he comes.

Enter Tinsel.

Tinsf. My dear widow!

Abig. My dear widow! marry come up! [*aside.*

Lady. Let him alone, Abigail, so long as he does not call me my dear wife, there's no harm done.

Tinsf. I have been most ridiculously diverted since I left you——your servants have made a convert of my booby.

by. His head is so filled with this foolish story of a drummer, that I expect the rogue will be afraid, hereafter to go upon a message by moon light.

Lady. Ah, Mr Tinsel, what a loss of billet-doux would that be to many a fine Lady!

Abig. Then you still believe this to be a foolish story? I thought my Lady had told you, that she had heard it herself.

Tinsf. Ha, ha, ha!

Abig. Why, you would not persuade us out of our senses.

Tinsf. Ha ha, ha!

Abig. There's manners for you, Madam. [*aside.*

Lady. Admirably rally'd! that laugh is unanswerable! now I'll be hang'd if you could forbear being witty upon me, if I should tell you I heard it no longer ago than last night.

Tinsf. Fancy!

Lady. But what if I should tell you my maid was with me!

Tinsf. Vapours! vapours! pray, my dear widow, will you answer me one question?—had you ever this noise of a drum in your head, all the while your husband was living?

Lady. And pray, Mr Tinsel, will you let me ask you another question? do you think we can hear in the country, as well as you do in town?

Tinsf. Believe me, Madam, I could prescribe you a cure for these imaginations.

Abig. Don't tell my lady of imaginations, Sir, I have heard it myself.

Tinsf. Hark thee, child—art thou not an old-maid?

Abig. Sir, if I am, it is mine own fault.

Tinsf. Whims! freaks! megrims! indeed Mrs Abigail.

Abig. Marry, Sir, by your talk one would believe you thought every thing that was good is a megrim.

Lady. Why truly I don't very well understand what you mean by your doctrine to me in the garden just now, that every thing we saw was made by chance.

Abig. A very pretty subject indeed for a lover to divert his mistress with.

Abig.

Lady. But I suppose that was only a taste of the conversation you would entertain me with after marriage.

Tinf. Oh I shall then have time to read you such lectures of motions, atoms, and nature—that you shall learn to think as freely as the best of us, and be convinced in less than a month, that all about us is chance work.

Lady. You are a very complaisant person indeed; and so you would make your court to me, by persuading me that I was made by chance!

Tinf. Ha, ha, ha! well said my dear! Why faith, thou wert a very lucky hit, that's certain.

Lady. Pray, Mr Tinsel, where did you learn this odd way of talking?

Tinf. Ah, widow, 'tis your country innocence makes you think it an odd way of talking.

Lady. Tho' you give no credit to stories of apparitions, I hope you believe there are such things as spirits!

Tinf. Simplicity!

Abig. I fancy you don't believe women have souls, d'ye Sir!

Tinf. Foolish enough!

Lady. I vow, Mr Tinsel, I'm afraid malicious people will say I'm in love with an atheist.

Tinf. Oh, my dear, that's an old fashion'd word—'m a free-thinker, child.

Abig. I am sure you are a free speaker.

Lady. Really, Mr Tinsel, considering that you are so fine a Gentleman, I'm amaz'd where you got all this learning! I wonder it has not spoil'd your breeding.

Tinf. To tell you the truth, I have not time to look into these dry matters myself, but I'm convinced by four or five learned men, whom I sometimes over hear at a coffeehouse I frequent, that our forefathers were a pack of asses, that the world has been in an error for some thousands of years and that all the people upon earth, excepting those two or three worthy Gentlemen, are impos'd upon, cheated, bubbled, abus'd bambuzzled—

Abig. Madam, how can you hear such a profligate? he talks like the London prodigal.

Lady. Why really I'm a thinking, if there be no such things

ings as spirits, a woman has no occasion, for marrying — she need not be afraid to lie by herself.

Tinf. Ah! my dear! are husbands good for nothing but to frighten away spirits? didn't thou think I could not instruct thee in several other comforts of matrimony?

Lady. Ah! but you are a man of so much knowledge that you would always be laughing at my ignorance—you learned men are so apt to despise one!

Tinf. No, child! I'd teach thee my principles, thou should'st be as wise as I am—in a week's time.

Lady. Do you think your principles would make a woman the better wife?

Tinf. Pr'ythee, widow don't be queer.

Lady. I love a gay temper, but I would not have you rally things that are serious.

Tinf. Well enough, faith! where's the jest of rallying any thing else!

Abig. Ah, Madam, did you ever hear Mr Fantome talk at this rate? *[aside.*

Tinf. But where's this ghost! the son of a whore of a drummer? I'd fain hear him, methinks.

Abig. Pray, Madam, don't suffer him to give the ghost such ill language, especially when you have reason to believe it is my master.

Tinf. That's well enough faith, Nab; dost thou think thy master is so unreasonable, as to continue his claim to his relict after his bones are laid? pray, widow, remember the words of your contract, you have fulfill'd them to a tittle——did not you marry Sir George to the tune of, 'till death us do part?

Lady. I must not hear Sir George's memory treated in so slight a manner—this fellow must have been at some pains to make, himself such a finish'd coxcomb. *[aside.*

Tinf. Give me but possession of your person, and I'll whirl you up to town for a winter, and cure you at once. Oh! I have known many a country Lady come to London with frightful stories of the hall house being haunted, of fairies, spirits, and witches; that by the time she had seen a comedy, play'd at an assembly, and ambled in a ball or two, has been so little afraid of bugbears, that she has ventur'd home in a chair at all hours of the night.

Abig.

Abig. Hum—saucy box

[*aside.*

Tinf. 'Tis the solitude of the country that creates these whimsies ; there was never such a thing as a ghost heard of at London, except in the play-house—Oh we'd pass all our time in London. 'Tis the scene of pleasure and diversions, where there's something to amuse you every hour of the day. Life's not life in the country.

Lady. Well then, you have an opportunity of showing the sincerity of that love to me which you profess. You may give a proof that you have an affection to my person, not my jointure.

Tinf. Your jointure ! how can you think me such a dog ! but child, won't your jointure be the same thing in London as in the country ?

Lady. No, you're deceiv'd ! you must know it is settled on me by marriage articles, on conditions that I live in this old mansion-house, and keep it up in repair.

Tinf. How !

Abig. That's well-put, Madam.

Tinf. Why faith I have been looking upon this house, and think it is the prettiest habitation I ever saw in my life.

Lady. Ay, but then this cruel drum !

Tinf. Something so venerable in it !

Lady. Ay, but the drum !

Tinf. For my part, I like this Gothic way of building better than any of your new orders—it would be a thousand pities it should fall to ruin.

Lady. Ay, but the drum !

Tinf. How pleasantly we two could pass our time in this delicious situation. Our lives would be a continu'd dream of happiness. Come, faith, widow, let's go upon the leads and take a view of the country.

Lady. Ay, but the drum ! the drum !

Tinf. My dear, take my word for't 'tis all fancy, besides, shou'd he drum in thy very bed-chamber, I should only hug thee the closer.

*Clasp'd in the folds of love, I'd meet my doom,
And all my joys, tho' thunder shock the room.*

A C T

ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE opens, and discovers Vellum in this office, and a letter in his hand.

V E L L U M.

THIS letter astonisheth ; may I believe may own eyes—or rather my spectacles—To Humphrey Vellum, Esq; Steward to the Lady Trueman.

Vellum,

‘ I Doubt not but you will be glad to hear your master is alive, and designs to be with you in half an hour. The report of my being slain in the Netherlands, has, I find, produced some disorders in my family. I am now at the George-Inn ; if an old man with a grey beard, in a black cloke, enquires after you, give him admittance. He passes for a conjurer, but is really

Your faithful friend,

G. Trueman.

P. S. Let this be a secret, and you shall find your account in it.’

This amazeth me ! and yet the reasons why I should believe he is still living are manifold—First, because this has often been the case of other military adventurers.

Secondly, because the news of his death was first publish’d in Dyer’s Letter.

Thirdly, Because this letter can be written by none but himself—I know his hand, and manner of spelling,

Fourthly,——

Enter Butler.

Butl. Sir, here’s a strange old Gentleman that asks for you ; he says he’s a conjurer, but he looks very suspicious ; I wish he ben’t a Jesuit.

Vel. Admit him immediately.

Butl. I wish he ben’t a Jesuit ; but he says he’s nothing but a conjurer.

Bring

Vel. He says right—he is no more than a conjurer.
Bring him in, and withdraw. *[Exit Butler.*

And fourthly, as I was saying, because—

Enter Butler with Sir George.

Butl. Sir, here in the conjurer—what a devilish long beard he has! I warrant it has been growing these hundred years. *[aside. Exit.*

Sir Geo. Dear Vellum, you have received my letter; but before we proceed lock the door.

Vel. It is his voice. *[Shuts the door.*

Sir Geo. In the next place help me off with this cumbersome cloke.

Vel. It is his shape.

Sir Geo. So, now lay my beard upon the table.

Vel. *[After having look'd on Sir George thro' his spectacles]* It is his face, every lineament!

Sir Geo. Well, now I have put off the conjurer and the old man, I can talk to thee more at my ease.

Vel. Believe me, my good master, I am as much rejoiced to see you alive, as I was upon the day you were born. Your name was in all the news-papers, in the list of these that were slain.

Sir Geo. We have not time to be particular. I shall only tell thee in general, that I was taken prisoner in the battle, and was under close confinement for several months. Upon my release, I was resolved to surprize my wife with the news of my being alive. I know, Vellum, you are a person of so much penetration, that I need not use any further arguments to convince you that I am so.

Vel. I am—and moreover, I question not but your good Lady will likewise be convinc'd of it. Her honour is a discerning Lady.

Sir Geo. I'm only afraid she shou'd be convinc'd of it to her sorrow. Is not she pleas'd with her imaginary widow-hood? tell me truly, was she afflicted at the report of my death?

Vel. Sorely.

Sir Geo. How long did her grief last?

Vel. Longer than I have known any widow's—at least three days.

Sir

Sir Geo. Three days, say'st thou? three whole days? I'm afraid thou flatterest me!—O woman! woman!

Vel. Grief is twofold.

Sir Geo. This blockhead is as methodical as ever—but I know he's honest. [aside.

Vel. There is a real grief, and there is a methodical grief; she was drown'd in tears till such time as the Taylor had made her widow's weeds—indeed they became her.

Sir Geo. Became her! and was that her comfort? truly a most seasonable consolation!

Vel. But I must needs say she paid a due regard to your memory, and could not forbear weeping when she saw company.

Sir Geo. That was kind indeed! I find she griev'd with a deal of good breeding. But how comes this gang of lovers about her?

Vel. Her jointure is considerable.

Sir Geo. How this fool torments me! [aside.

Vel. Her person is amiable——

Sir Geo. Death! [aside.

Vel. But her character is unblemish'd. She has been as virtuous in your absence as a Penelope——

Sir Geo. And has had as many suitors?

Vel. Several have made their overtures.

Sir Geo. Several!

Vel. But she has rejected all.

Sir Geo. There thou reviv'st me—but what means this Tinsel? are his visits acceptable?

Vel. He is young.

Sir Geo. Does she listen to him?

Vel. He is gay.

Sir Geo. Sure she could never entertain a thought of marrying such a coxcomb!

Vel. He is not ill made

Sir Geo. Are the vows and protestations that pass between us come to this! I can't bear the thought of it! is Tinsel the man design'd for my worthy successor?

Vel. You do not consider that you have been dead these fourteen months——

Sir Geo. Was there ever such a dog?

[aside.

Vel.

Vel. And I have often heard her say, that she must never expect to find a second Sir George Trueman—— meaning your honour.

Sir Geo. I think she lov'd me; but I must search into this story of the drummer before I discover myself to her. I have put on this habit of a conjurer, in order to introduce myself. It must be your business to recommend me as a most profound person, that by my great knowledge in the curious arts can silence the drummer, and dispossess the house.

Vel. I am going to lay my accounts before my Lady, and I will endeavour to prevail upon her honour to admit the trial of your art.

Sir Geo. I have scarce heard of any of these stories that did not arise from a love intrigue——Amours raise as many ghosts as murders.

Vel. Mrs Abigail endeavours to persuade us, that 'tis your honour who troubles the house.

Sir Geo. That convinces me 'tis a cheat, for I think, Vellum, I may be pretty well assur'd it is not me.

Vel. I am apt to think so truly. Ha——ha——ha?

Sir Geo. Abigail had always an ascendant over her Lady, and if there is any trick in this matter, depend upon it she is at the bottom of it. I'll be hang'd if this ghost be not one of Abigail's familiars.

Vel. Mrs Abigail has of late been very mysterious.

Sir Geo. I fancy, Vellum, thou could'st worm it out of her. I know formerly there was an amour between you.

Vel. Mrs Abigail hath her allurements, and she knows I have pick'd up a competency in your honour's service.

Sir Geo. If thou hast, all I ask of thee in return is, that thou would'st immediately renew thy addresses to her. Cox her up. Thou hast such a silver tongue, Vellum, as 'twill be impossible for her to withstand. Besides, she is so very a woman, that she'll like thee the better for giving her the pleasure of telling a secret. In short, wheedle her out of it, and I shall act by the advice which thou givest me.

Vel. Mrs Abigail was never deaf to me, when I talked upon that subject. I will take an opportunity of addressing

sing myself to her in the most pathetic manner.

Sir Geo. In the mean time lock me up in your office, and bring me word what success you have — well, sure I am the first that ever was employ'd to lay himself.

Vel. You aēt indeed a threefold part in this house ; you are a ghost, a conjurer, and my ho noured master Sir George Trueman ; he, he, he ! you will pardon me for being jocular.

Sir Geo. O, Mr Vellum, with all my heart. You know I love you men of wit and humour. Be as merry as thou pleasest, so thou dost thy business. [*Mimicking him*] You will remember, Vellum, your commission is two-fold, first to gain admission for me to your Lady, and secondly to get the secret out of Abigal.

Vel. It sufficeth.

[*The scene shuts.*]

Enter Lady sala.

Lady. Women who have been happy in a first marriage, are the most apt to venture upon a second. But for my part I had a husband so every way suited to my inclinations, that I must entirely forget him, before I can like another man. I have now been a widow but fourteen months, and have had twice as many lovers, all of 'em perfect admirers of my person, but passionately in love with my jointure. I think it is a revenge I owe my sex to make an example of this worthless tribe of fellows, who grow impudent, dress themselves fine, and fancy we are obliged to provide for 'em. But of all my captives, Mr Tinsel is the most extraordinary in his kind. I hope the diversion I give myself with him is unblameable. I'm sure 'tis necessary to turn my thoughts off from the memory of that dear man, who has been the greatest happiness and affliction of my life. My heart would be a prey to melancholy, if I did not find these innocent methods of relieving it. But here comes Abigal, I must teaze the baggage, for I find she has taken it into her head that I am intirely at her disposal.

Enter Abigal.

Abig. Madam ! Madam ! yonder's Mr Tinsel has as good as taken possession of your house. Marry, he says, he must have Sir George's apartment enlarg'd : for truly says he, I hate to be tiraitned. Nay, he was so impudent

dent as to shew me the chamber where he intends to consummate, as he calls it.

Lady. Well ! he's a wild fellow.

Abig. Indeed he's a very sad man, Madam.

Lady. He's young, Abigal ; 'tis a thousand pities he should be lost ; I should be mighty glad to reform him.

Abig. Reform him ! marry hang him !

Lady. Has not he a great deal of life !

Abig. Ay, enough to make your heart ache.

Lady. I dare say thou think'st him a very agreeable fellow.

Abig. He thinks himself so, I'll answer for him.

Lady. He's very good natur'd.

Abig. He ought to be so, for he's very silly.

Lady. Dost thou think he loves me ?

Abig. Mr Fantome did, I am sure.

Lady. With what raptures he talk'd !

Abig. Yes, 'twas in praise of your jointure-house.

Lady. He has kept bad company.

Abig. They must be very bad indeed, if they were worse than himself.

Lady. I have a strong fancy a good woman might reform him.

Abig. It would be a fine experiment, if it should not succeed.

Lady. Well Abigal, we'll talk of that another time ; here comes the Steward, I have no further occasion for you at present.

[*Exit Abigal.*]

Enter Vellum.

Vel. Madam, is your honour at leisure to look into the accounts of the last week ? they rise very high—house-keeping is chargeable in a house that is haunted.

Lady. How comes that to pass ? I hope the drum neither eats nor drinks ? but read your account, Vellum.

Vel. [*Putting on and off his spectacles in this scene*] A hoghead and a half of ale—it is not for the ghost's drinking—but your honour's servants say they must have something to keep up their courage against this strange noise. They tell me they expect a double quantity of malt

malt in their small beer, so long as the house continues in this condition.

Lady. At this rate they'll take care to be frighten'd all the year round, I'll answer for 'em. But go on.

Vel. Item. Two sheep, and a — where is the ox? — Oh, here I have him — and 'an ox — your ho-nour must always have a piece of cold beef in the house for the entertainment of so many strangers, who come from all parts to hear this drum. *Item,* Bread, ten peck loaves — they cannot eat beef without bread — *Item,* three barrels of table-beer — they must drink with their meat.

Lady. Sure no woman in England has a Steward that makes such ingenious comments on his works. [*aside.*]

Vel. Item, To Mr Tinsel's servants five bottles of port wine — it was by your ho-nour's order — *Item,* three bottles of sack for the use of Mrs Abigail.

Lady. I suppose that was by your own order.

Vel. We have been long friends, we are your honour's ancient servants; sack is an innocent cordial, and gives her spirit to chide the servants, when they are tardy in their business; he, he, he! pardon me for being jocular.

Lady. Well I see you'll come together at last.

Vel. Item, A dozen pound of watch-lights for the use of the servants.

Lady. For the use of the servants! What, are the rogues afraid of sleeping in the dark! what an unfortunate woman am I! this is such a particular distress, it puts me to my wits end. Vellum, what would you advise me to do?

Vel. Madam your ho-nour has two points to consider. *Imprimis,* To retrench these extravagant expences, which so many strangers bring upon you — *Secondly,* To clear the house of this invisible drummer.

Lady. This learned division leaves me just as wise as I was. But how must we bring these two points to bear?

Vel. I beseech your ho-nour to give me the hearing.

Lady. I do. But pr'ythee take pity on me, and be not tedious.

Vel. I will be concise. There is a certain person arriv'd this morning, an aged man of a venerable aspect, and of a long hoary beard, that reaches down to his girdle.

The

The common people call him a wizard, a white witch, conjurer, a cunning man, a necromancer, a ——

Lady. No matter for his titles. But what of ail this?

Vel. Give me the hearing, good my lady. He pretends to great skill in the occult sciences, and is come hither upon the rumour of this drum. If one may believe him he knows the secret of laying ghosts, or of quieting houses that are haunted.

Lady. Pho, these are idle stories to amuse the country people, this can do us no good.

Vel. It can do us no harm, my Lady.

Lady. I dare say thou dost not believe there is any thing in it thyself.

Vel. I cannot say, I do; there is no danger however in the experiment. Let him try his skill; if it should succeed, we are rid of the drum; if it should not, we may tell the world that it has, and by that means at least get out of this expensive way of living: so that it must turn to your advantage one way or another.

Lady. I think you argue very rightly. But where is the man? I would fain see him. He must be a curiosity.

Vel. I have already discoursed him, and he is to be with me in my office, half an hour hence. He asks nothing for his pains, till he has done his work—no cure, no money.

Lady. That circumstance, I must confess, would make one believe there is more in his art than one would imagine. Pray Vellum, go and fetch him hither immediately.

Vel. I am gone. He shall be forth coming forthwith.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Butler, Coachman, and Gardiner.

Butl. Rare news, my lads, rare news!

Gard. What's the matter! hast thou got any more vales for us?

Butl. No, 'tis better than that.

Coach. Is there another stranger come to the house?

Butl. Ay, such a stranger as will make all our lives easy.

Gard. What! is he a Lord?

Butl. A Lord! nothing like it.—He's a conjurer.

Coach. A conjurer! what, is he come a wooing to my Lady?

Butl. No, no, you fool, he's come on purpose to lay the spirit.

Coach. Ay marry, that's good news indeed ; but where is he ?

Butl. He's lock'd up with the steward in his office, they are laying their heads together very close. I fancy they are calling a figure.

Gard. Pr'ythee John, what sort of a creature is a conjurer ?

Butl. Why he's made much as other men are, if it was not for his long grey beard.

Coach. Look ye, Peter, it stands with reason that a conjurer should have a long grey beard—for did you ever know a witch that was not an old woman ?

Gard. Why ! I remember a conjurer once at a fair, that to my thinking was a very smock-fac'd man, and yet he spew'd out fifty yards of green ferret. I fancy, John, if thou'dst get him into the pantry and give him a cup of ale, he'd shew us a few tricks. Dost think we cou'd not persuade him to swallow one of thy case-knives for his diversion ? he'll certainly bring it up again,

Butl. Peter, thou art such a wiseacre ! thou dost not know the difference between a conjurer and a jugg'er. This man must be a very great master of his trade. His beard is at least half a yard long, he's dress'd in a strange dark cloak, as black as a coal. Your conjurer always goes in mourning.

Gard. Is he a gentleman ? had he a sword by his side ?

Butl. No, no, he's too grave a man for that ; a conjurer is as grave as a judge—but he had a long white wand in his hand.

Coach. You may be sure there's a good deal of virtue in that wand—I fancy 'tis made out of witch-elm.

Gard. I warrant you if the ghost appears, he'll whisk ye that wand before his eyes, and strike you the drumstick out of his hand.

Butl. No ; the wand, look ye, is to make a circle, and if he once gets the ghost in a circle, then he has him—let him get out again if he can. A circle, you must know, is a conjurer's trap.

Coachm. But what will he do with him, when he has him there ?

Butl.

Butl. Why then he'll overpower him with his learning.

Gard. if he can once compass him, and get him in lob's pond, he'll make nothing of him, but speak a few hard words to him, and perhaps bind him over to his good behaviour for a thousand years.

Coachm. Ay, ay, he'll fend him packing to his grave again with a flea in his ear, I warrant him.

Butl. No, no, I would advise Madam to spare no cost. If the conjurer be but well paid, he'll take pains upon the ghost, and lay him, look ye, in the red-sea—and then he's laid for ever.

Coachm. Ay, marry that would spoil his drum for him.

Gard. Why John, there must be a power of spirits in that same red-sea—I warrant ye they are as plenty as fish.

Coachm. Well, I wish after all that he may not be too hard for the conjurer; I'm afraid he'll find a tough bit of work on't.

Gard. I wish the spirit may not carry a corner of the house off with him.

Butl. As for that, Peter, you may be sure that the Steward has made his bargain with the cunning man before hand, that he shall stand to all costs and damages—but hark! yonder's Mrs Abigail, we shall have her with us immediately, if we do not get off.

Gard. Ay lads! if we could get Mrs Abigail well laid too—we should lead merry lives.

*For to a man like me that's stout and bold,
A ghost is not so dreadful as a scold.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE opens, and discovers Sir George in Vellum's Office.

SIR GEORGE.

I Wonder I don't hear of Vellum yet. But I know his wisdom will do nothing rashly. The fellow has been so used to form in business, that it has infected his whole conversation. But I must not find fault with that puc-

tual and exact behaviour, which has been of so much use to me; my estate is the better for it.

Enter Vellum.

Well Vellum, I'm impatient to hear your success.

Vel. First, let me lock the door.

Sir Geo. Will your Lady admit me?

Vel. If this lock is not mended soon, it will be quite spoiled.

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee let the lock alone at present, and answer me.

Vel. Delays in business are dangerous—I must send for the Smith next week—and in the mean time will take a minute of it.

Sir Geo. What says your Lady!

Vel. This pen is naught, and wants mending—My Lady, did you say?

Sir Geo. Does she admit me?

Vel. I have gain'd admission for you as a conjurer.

Sir Geo. That's enough! I'll gain admission for myself as a husband. Does she believe there is any thing in my art?

Vel. It is hard to know what a woman believes.

Sir Geo. Did she ask no questions about me!

Vel. Sundry—she desires to talk with you herself, before you enter upon your business.

Sir Geo. But when?

Vel. Immediately. This instant;

Sir Geo. Pugh. What hast thou been doing all this while! why didst not tell me so? give me my cloak—have you yet met with Abigail?

Vel. I have not yet had an opportunity of talking with her. But we have interchanged some languishing glances.

Sir Geo. Let thee alone for that, Vellum, I have formerly seen thee ogle her through thy spectacles. Well! this is a most venerable cloak. After the business of this day is over, I'll make thee a present of it. 'Twill become thee mightily.

Vel. He, he, he! wou'd you make a conjurer of your steward?

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee don't be jocular, I'm in haste. Help me on with my beard.

Vel.

Vel. And what will your honour do with your cast beard?

Sir Geo. Why, faith, thy gravity wants only such a beard to it; if thou would'st wear it with the cloak, thou would'st make a most complete heathen philosopher. But where's my wand?

Vel. A fine taper stick! it is well chosen. I will keep this till you are sheriff of the county. It is not my custom to let any thing be lost.

Sir Geo. Come, Vellum, lead the way. You must introduce me to your Lady. Thou'rt the fittest fellow in the world to be a master of the ceremonies to a conjurer.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Abigal crossing the stage, Tinsel following.

Tinsf. Naby, Naby, whither so fast, child!

Abig. Keep your hands to yourself. I'm going to call the steward to my Lady.

Tinsf. What? Goodman twofold? I met him walking with a strange old fellow yonder. I suppose he belongs to the family too. He looks very antique. He must be some of the furniture of this old mansion house.

Abig. What does the man mean? don't think to palm me, as you do my Lady.

Tinsf. Pr'ythee, Naby, tell me one thing; what's the reason thou art my enemy?

Abig. Marry, because I'm a friend to my Lady.

Tinsf. Dost thou see any thing about me thou dost not like? come hither, hussy, give me a kiss; don't be ill-natur'd.

Abig. Sir, I know how to be civil. [*Kisses her.*]—this rogue will carry off my Lady, if I don't take care.

[*aside.*]

Tinsf. Thy lips are soft as velvet, Abigal, I must get thee a husband.

Abig. Ay, now you don't speak idly, I can talk to you.

Tinsf. I have one in my eye for thee. Dost thou love a young lusty son of a whore?

Abig. Laud, how you talk!

Tinsf. This is a thundering dog.

Abig. What is he!

Tinsf.

Tinf. A private Gentleman.

Abig. Ay, where does he live?

Tinf. In the horse guards—but he has one fault I must tell thee of. If thou canst bear with that he's a man for thy purpose.

Abig. Pray, Mr Tinsel, what may that be!

Tinf. He's but five and twenty years old

Abig. 'Tis no matter for his age, if he has been well educated.

Tinf. No man better, child: he'll tye a wig, tofs a dye, make a pass, and swear with such a grace, as wou'd make thy heart leap to hear him.

Abig. Half these accomplishments will do, provided he has an estate—Pray what has he!

Tinf. Not a farthing.

Abig. Pox on him, what do I give him the hearing for! *[aside.]*

Tinf. But as for that I wou'd make it up to him.

Abig. How?

Tinf. Why look ye, child, as soon as I have married thy Lady, I design to discard this old prig of a steward, and to put this honest gentleman, I am speaking of into his place.

Abig. This fellow's a fool—I'll have no more to say to him. *[aside.]*—Hark! my Lady's a coming!

Tinf. Depend upon it Nab, I'll remember my promise

Abig. Ay, and so will I too—to your cost. *[aside.]*

[Exit Abigal.]

Tinf. My dear is purely fitted up with a maid—but I shall rid the house of her.

Enter Lady.

Lady. Oh, Mr Tinsel, I am glad to meet you here. I am going to give you an entertainment, that won't be disagreeable to a man of wit and pleasure of the town—There may be something diverting in a conversation between a conjurer and this conceited ass. *[aside.]*

Tinf. She loves me to distraction, I see that. *[aside.]*
—Pr'ythee, widow, explain thyself.

Lady.—You must know there is a strange sort of a man come to town, who undertakes to free the house from this disturbance. The steward believes him a conjurer.

Tinf. Ay; thy steward is a deep one!

Lady. He's to be here immediately. It is indeed an odd figure of a man.

Tinf. Oh! I warrant you he has study'd the black art! ha, ha, ha! is he not an Oxford scholar?—widow, thy house is the most extraordinarily inhabited of any widow's this day in Christendom.—I think thy four chief domesticks are—a wither'd Abigail—a superannuated steward—a ghost—and a conjurer.

Lady. [*Mimicking Tinsel.*] And you wou'd have it inhabited by a fifth, who is a more extraordinary person than any of all these four.

Tinf. It's a sure sign a woman loves you, when she imitates your manner. [*aside.*]—Thou'rt very smart, my dear. But see! smook the doctor.

Enter. Vellum, and Sir George in his conjurer's habit.

Vel. I will introduce this profound person to your Ladyship, and then leave him with you—Sir, this is her honour.

Sir Geo. I know it well. [*Exit Vellum.*]

[*Aside, walking in a musing posture.*] That dear woman! the sight of her unmans me, I cou'd weep for tenderness, did not I, at the same time, feel an indignation rise in me, to see that wretch with her: and yet I cannot but smile to see her in the company of her first and second husband at the same time.

Lady. Mr Tinsel, do you speak to him; you are used to the company of men of learning.

Tinf. Old Gentleman, thou dost not look like an inhabitant of this world; I suppose thou art lately come down from the stars. Pray what news is stirring in the zodiack?

Sir Geo. News that ought to make the heart of a coward tremble. Mars is now entring into the first house, and will shortly appear in all his domal dignities.

Tinf. Mars? Pr'ythee, father-grey-beard, explain thyself.

Sir Geo. The entrance of Mars into his house, portends the entrance of a master into this family—and that soon.

Tinf. D'ye hear that, widow? the stars have cut me out for thy husband. This house is to have a master, and that

that soon—hark thee, old Gadbury, is not Mars very like a young fellow called Tom Tinsel?

Sir Geo. Not so much as Venus is like this Lady.

Tins. A word in your ear, Doctor; these two planets will be in conjunction by and by; I can tell you that.

Sir Geo. [*aside, walking disturbed.*] Curse on this impertinent top! I shall scarce forbear discovering myself—Madam, I am told that your house is visited with strange noises.

Lady. And I am told that you can quiet them, I must confess I had a curiosity to see the person I had heard so much of; and, indeed your aspect shows that you have had much experience in the world. You must be a very aged man.

Sir Geo. My aspect deceives you; what do you think is my real age?

Tins. I shou'd guess thee within three years of Methuselah. Pr'ythee tell me, wast thou not born before the flood?

Lady. Truly I shou'd guess you to be in your second or third century. I warrant you, you have great grandchildren with beards of a foot long.

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! if there be truth in man. I was but five and thirty last August. O! the study of the occult sciences makes a man's beard grow faster than you would imagine.

Lady. What an escape you have had, Mr Tinsel, that you were not bred a scholar!

Tins. And so I fancy, doctor, thou think'st me an illiterate fellow, because I have a smooth chin?

Sir Geo. Hark ye, Sir, a word in your ear. You are a coxcomb by all the rules of physiognomy: but let that be a secret between you and me. [*aside to Tinsel.*]

Lady. Pray, Mr Tinsel, what is it the doctor whispers?

Tins. Only a compliment, child, upon two or three of my features. It does not become me to repeat it.

Lady. Pary, doctor, examine this Gentleman's face, and tell me his fortune.

Sir Geo. If I may believe the lines of his face, he likes it better than I do, or——than you do, fair Lady.

Tins. Widow, I hope now thou'rt convinc'd he's a cheat,

Lady.

Lady. For my part I believe he's a witch——go on, doctor.

Sir Geo. He will be cross'd in love; and that soon.

Tins. Pr'ythee, doctor, tell us the truth. Dost not thou live in Moor-fields?

Sir Geo. Take my word for it, thou shalt never live in my Lady Trueman's mansion-house.

Tins. Pray, old Gentleman, hast thou never been plucked by the beard when thou wert saucy?

Lady. Nay, Mr Tinsel, you are angry! do thou think I wou'd marry a man that dares not have his fortune told?

Sir Geo. Let him be angry——I matter not——he is but short-liv'd. He will soon die of——

Tins. Come, come, speak out, old Hocus, he, he, he! this fellow makes me burst with laughing. [*Forces a laugh.*]

Sir Geo. He will soon die of a fright——or of the——let me see your nose——ay——'tis so!

Tins. You son of a whore! I'll run you through the body. I never yet made the sun shine through a conjurer.

Lady. Oh, fy, Mr Tinsel! you will not kill an old man?

Tins. An old man! the dog says he's but five and thirty.

Lady. Oh, fy, Mr Tinsel, I did not think you could have been so passionate; I hate a passionate man. Put up your sword, or I must never see you again.

Tins. Ha, ha, ha! I was but in jest, my dear. I had a mind to have made an experiment upon the doctor's body. I wou'd have but drill'd a little eye-let hole in it, and have seen whether he had art enough no close it up again.

Sir Geo. Courage is but ill shown before a Lady. But know, if ever I meet thee again thou shalt find this arm can wield other weapons besides this wand.

Tins. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady. Well, learned Sir, you are to give a proof of your art, not of your courage. Or if you will show your courage, let it be at nine o'clock——for that is the time the noise is generally heard.

Tins. And look, ye, old Gentleman, if thou dost not do thy business well, I can tell thee by the little skill I have,

have, that thou wilt be tofs'd in a blanket before ten. We'll do our endeavour to fend thee back to the stars again.

Sir Geo. I'll go and prepare myself for the ceremonies—and Lady, as you expect they shou'd succeed to your wishes, treat that fellow with the contempt he deserves. [Exit Sir George.

Tinf. The sauciest dog I ever talk'd with in my whole life !

Lady. Methinks he's a diverting fellow ; may see
he's no fool. one

Tinf. No fool ! ay, but thou dost not take him for a conjurer.

Lady. Truly I don't know what to take him for ; I am resolv'd to employ him however. When a sickness is desperate, we often try remedies that we have no great faith in.

Enter Abigal.

Abig. Madam, the tea is ready in the parlour, as you order'd.

Lady. Come, Mr Tinsel, we may there talk of this subject more at leisure. [Exeunt Lady and Tinsel.

Abigal sola.

Sure never any Lady had such servants as mine has ! well, if I get this thousand pounds, I hope to have some of my own. Let me see, I'll have a pretty tight girl—just such as I was ten years ago (I'm afraid I may say twenty) she shall dress me and flatter me——for I will be flatter'd, that's pos ! my Lady's cast suits will serve her, after I have given them the wearing. Besides, when I am worth a thousand pounds, I shall, certainly carry off the steward——Madam Vellum——how prettily that will sound ! here, bring out Madam Vellum's chaise——nay, I do not know but it may be a chariot——It will break the attorney's wife's heart——for I shall take place of every body in the parish but my Lady. If I have a son, he shall be call'd Fantome. But see Mr Vellum, as I could wish. I know his humour, and I will do my utmost to gain his heart.

Enter Vellum with a pint of Sack.

Vel. Mrs Abigal, don't I break in upon you unseasonably ?

Abig.

Abig. Oh, no, Mr Vellum, your visits are always reasonable.

Vel. I have brought with me a taste of fresh Canary, which I think is delicious.

Abig. Pray set it down—I have a dram glass just by—
[Brings in a Tumbler.]

I'll pledge you; my Lady's good health.

Vel. and your own with it——sweet Mrs Abigail.

Abig. Pray, good Mr Vellum, buy me a little parcel of this sack, and put it under the article of tea——I would not have my name appear to it.

Vel. Mrs Abigail, your name seldom appears in my bills——and——yet if you will allow me a merry expression——you have been always in my books, Mrs Abigail, Ha, ha, ha!

Abig. Ha, ha, ha! Mr Vellum, you are such a dry jesting man.

Vel. Why truly, Mrs Abigail, I have been looking over my papers-----and I find you have been a long time my debtor.

Abig. Your debtor for what, Mr Vellum?

Vel. For my heart, Mrs Abigail, and our accounts will not be ballanc'd between us, till I have yours in exchange for it, Ha, ha, ha!

Abig. Ha, ha, ha! you are the most gallant dun, Mr Vellum.

Vel. But I am not us'd to be paid by words only, Mrs Abigail; when will you be out of my debt?

Abig. Oh, Mr Vellum, you make one blush——my humble service to you.

Vel. I must answer you, Mrs Abigail, in the country phrase——*Your love is sufficient.* Ha, ha, ha!

Abig. Ha, ha, ha! Well, I must own, I love a merry man!

Vel. Let me see, how long is it, Mrs Abigail, since I first broke my mind to you—it was, I think, *Undecimo Gulielmi*,-----we have conversed together these fifteen years—and yet, Mrs Abigail, I must drink to our better acquaintance. He, he, he,—Mrs Abigail, you know I am naturally jocular.

Abig.

Abig. Ah, you men love to make sport with us silly creatures.

Vel. Mrs Abigal, I have a trifle about me, which I would willingly make you a present of. It is indeed but a little toy.

Abig. You are always exceedingly obliging.

Vel. It is but a little toy — scarce worth your acceptance.

Abig. Pray don't keep me in suspense; what is it, Mr Vellum?

Vel. A silver thimble.

Abig. I always said Mr Vellum was a generous lover.

Vel. But I must put it on myself, Mrs Abigal,—you have the prettiest tip of a finger— I must take the freedom to salute it.

Abig. Oh fy! you make me a sham'd, Mr Vellum; how can you do so? I protest I am in such a confusion—

A feigned struggle.

Vel. This finger is not the finger of idleness; it bears the honourable scars of the needle— but why are you so cruel as not to pare your nails?

Abig. Oh, I vow you press it so hard! pray give me my finger again.

Vel. This middle finger, Mrs Abigal, has a pretty neighbour— a wedding-ring would become it mightily— He, he, he!

Abig. You're so full of your jokes. Ay, but where must I find one for it?

Vel. I design this thimble only as the forerunner of it. They will set off each other, and are— indeed a twofold emblem. The first will put you in mind of being a good house wife, and the other of being a good wife. Ha, ha, ha!

Abig. Yes, yes, I see you laugh at me.

Vel. Indeed I am serious.

Abig. I thought you had quite forsaken me— I am sure you cannot forget the many repeated vows and promises you formerly made me.

Vel. I should as soon forget the multiplication table.

Abig. I have always taken your part before my Lady.

Vel. You have so, and I have *item'd* it in my memory.

Abig.

Abig. For I have always look'd upon your interests as my own.

Vel. It is nothing but your cruelty can hinder them from being so.

Abig. I must strike while the iron's hot. [*Aside.*]— Well, Mr Vellum, there's no refusing you, you have such a bewitching tongue!

Vel. How? speak that again!

Abig. Why then in plain English I love you.

Vel. I'm overjoy'd!

Abig. I must own my passion for you.

Vel. I'm transported! [*Catches her in his arms.*]

Abig. Dear charming man!

Vel. Thou sum total of all my happiness!--I shall grow extravagant! I can't forbear to drink thy virtuous inclinations in a bumper of Sack. Your Lady must make haste, my duck, or we shall provide a young steward to the estate, before she has an heir to it--Pr'ythee, my dear, does she intend to marry Mr Tinsel?

Abig. Marry him, my love, no, no! we must take care of that! there would be no staying in the house for us if she did. That young Rake-hell would send all the old servants a-grazing. You and I should be discarded before the honey moon was at an end.

Vel. Pr'ythee, sweet one, does not this drum put the thoughts of marriage out of her head?

Abig. This drum, my dear, if it be well manag'd, will be no less than a thousand pound in our way.

Vel. Ay, say'st thou so, my turtle?

Abig. Since we are now as good as man and wife-- I I mean, almost as good as man and wife--I ought to conceal nothing from you.

Vel. Certainly, my dove, not from thy yoke-fellow, thy help-mate, thy own flesh and blood!

Abig. Hush! I hear Mr Tinsel's laugh, my Lady and he are coming this way; if you will take a turn without I'll tell you the whole contrivance.

Vel. Give me your hand, chicken.

Abig. Here take it, you have my heart already.

Vel. We shall have much issue.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter Vellum and Butler.

VELLUM.

JOH N, I have certain orders to give you---and therefore be attentive.

Butl. Attentive! Ay, let me alone for that-- I suppose he means being sober. *[Aside.*

Vel. You know I have always recommended to you a method in your business: I wou'd have your knives and forks, your spoons and napkins, your plate and glasses, laid in a method.

Butl. Ah, Mr Vellum, you are such a sweet spoken man it does one's heart good to receive your orders.

Vel. Method, John, makes business easy, it banishes all perplexity and confusion out of families.

Butl. How he talks! I could hear him all day.

Vel. And now, John, let me know whether your table-linen, your side board, your cellar, and every thing else within your province, are properly and methodically dispos'd for an entertainment this evening.

Butl. Master Vellum, they shall be ready at a quarter of an hour's warning. But pray Sir, is this entertainment to be made for the conjurer?

Vel. It is, John, for the conjurer, and yet it is not for the conjurer.

Butl. Why, look you Master Vellum, if it is for the conjurer, the cook maid shou'd have orders to get him some dishes to his palate. Perhaps he may like a little brimstone in his sauce.

Vel. This conjurer, John, is a complicated creature, an amphibious animal, a person of a twofold nature----- but he eats and drinks like other men.

Butl. Marry, Master Vellum, he shou'd eat and drink as much as two other men, by the account you give of him.

Vel. Thy conceit is not ami's, he is indeed a double man, ha, ha, ha!

Butl.

Butl. Ha! I understand you, he's one of your hermaphrodites, as they call 'em.

Vel. He is married, and he is not married--he hath a beard, and he hath no beard. He is old, and he is young.

Butl. How charmingly he talks! I fancy, Master Vellum, you could make a riddle. The same man old and young! how do you make that out, Master Vellum?

Vel. Thou hast heard of a snake casting his skin, and recovering his youth. Such is this sage person.

Butl. Nay, 'tis no wonder a conjurer should be like a serpent.

Vel. When he has thrown aside the old conjurer's slough that hangs about him, he'll come out as fine a young gentleman as ever was seen in this house.

Butl. Does he intend to sup in his slough?

Vel. That time will show.

Butl. Well. I have not a head for these things. Indeed, Mr Vellum I have not understood one word you have said this half hour.

Vel. I did not intend thou shou'dst—but to our business—let there be a table spread in the great hall. Let your pots and glasses be wash'd, and in a readiness. Bid the cook provide a plentiful supper, and see that all the servants be in their best liveries.

Butl. Ay! now I understand every word you say, But I wou'd rather hear you talk a little in that t'other way.

Vel. I shall explain to thee what I have said by and by — bid Susan lay two pillows upon your Lady's bed.

Butl. Two, pillows! Madam won't sleep upon 'em both! she is not a double woman too.

Vel. She will sleep upon neither. But hark, Mrs Abiga', I think I hear her chiding the cook maid.

Butl. Then I'll away, or it will be my turn next; she, I am sure speaks plain English, one may easily understand every word she says. [Exit Butler.

Vellum *solus.*

Vel. Servants are good for nothing, unless they have an opinion of the person's understanding who has the direction of them—but see Mrs Abigail! she has a bewitching countenance,

countenance, I wish I may not be tempted to marry her in good earnest.

Enter Abigal.

Abig. Ha ! Mr Vellum.

Vel. What brings my sweet one hither ?

Abig. I am coming to speak to my friend behind the waincot. It is fit, child, he should have an account of this conjurer, that he may not be surpris'd.

Vel. That wou'd be as much as thy thousand pound is worth.

Abig. I'll speak low—walls have ears.

[Pointing at the waincot.

Vel. But hark you, ducklin ! be sure you do not tell him that I am let into the secret.

Abig. That's a good one indeed ! as if I should ever tell what passes between you and me.

Vel. No, no, my child, that must not be, he, he, he ! that must not be : he, he, he !

Abig. You will always be waggish.

Vel. Adieu, and let me hear the result of your conference.

Abig. How can you leave one so soon ? I shall think it an age till I see you again.

Vel. Adieu my pretty one.

Abig. Adieu sweet Mr Vellum !

Vel. My pretty one——

[As he is going off.

Abig. Dear Mr Vellum !

Vel. My pretty one !

[Exit Vellum.

Abigal sola.

Abig. I have him——If I can but get this thousand pound.

[Fantome gives three raps upon his drum behind the waincot.

Abig. Ha ! three raps upon the drum ! the signal Mr Fantome and I agreed upon, when he had a mind to speak with me.

[Fantome raps again.

Abig. Very well, I hear you ; come fox, come out of your hole.

Scene opens, and Fantome comes out.

Abig. You may leave your drum in the wardrobe, till you have occasion for it.

Fan:.

Fant. Well, Mrs Abigal, I want to hear what is a doing in the world.

Abig. You are a very inquisitive spirit. But I must tell you, if you do not take care of yourself, you will be laid this evening.

Fant. I have overheard something of that matter. But let me alone for the doctor—I'll engage to give a good account of him. I am more in pain about Tinsel. When a Lady's in the case, I'm more afraid of one fop than twenty conjurers.

Abig. To tell you truly, he presses his attacks with so much impudence, that he has made more progress with my Lady in two days, than you did in two months.

Fant. I shall attack her in another manner, if thou canst but procure me another interview. There's nothing makes a lover so keen, as being kept up in the dark.

Abig. Pray no more of your distant bows, your respectful compliments——really, Mr Fantome, you're only fit to make love a cross a tea-table.

Fant. My dear girl, I can't forbear hugging thee for thy good advice.

Abig. Ay, now I have some hopes of you; but why don't you do so to my Lady?

Fant. Child, I always thought your Lady lov'd to be treated with respect.

Abig. Believe me, Mr Fantome, there is not so great a difference between woman and woman, as you imagine. You see Tinsel has nothing but his sauciness to recommend him.

Fant. Tinsel is too great a coxcomb to be capable of love—and let me tell thee, Abigal, a man, who is sincere in his passion, makes but a very awkward profession of it——but I'll mend my manners.

Abig. Ay, or you'll never gain a widow—come, I must tutor you a little; suppose me to be my Lady, and let me see how you'll behave yourself.

Fant. I'm afraid, child, we han't time for such a piece of mummery.

Abig. Oh, 'twill be quickly over, if you play your part well.

Fant.

Fant. Why then, dear Mrs Ab——I mean my Lady Trueman.

Abig. Ay! but you han't saluted me.

Fant. That's right; faith I forgot that circumstance, [*Kisses her.*] Nectar and Ambrosia!

Abig. That's very well——

Fant. How long must I be condemned to languish! when shall my sufferings have an end! my life! my happiness, my all is wound up in you——

Abig. Well! why don't you squeeze my hand?

Fant. What, thus!

Abig. Thus? ay——now throw your arm about my middle; hug me closer——you are not afraid of hurting me! now pour forth a volley of rapture and nonsense, till you are out of breath.

Fant. Transport and extacy! Where am I——my life, my blefs! I rage, I burn, I bleed, I die!

Abig. Go on, go on.

Fant. Flames and darts——bear me to the gloomy shade, rocks and grottos——flowers, zephyrs, and purling streams.

Abig. Oh Mr Fantome, you have a tongue wou'd undo a vessel! you were born for the ruin of our sex.

Fant. This will do then, Abigal?

Abig. Ay, this is talking like a lover. Tho' I only represent my Lady, I take a pleasure in hearing you. Well, o' my conscience when a man of sense has a little dash of the coxcomb in him, no woman can resist him. Go on at this rate, and the thousand pound is as good as in my pocket.

Fant. I shall think it an age till I have an opportunity of putting this lesson in practice.

Abig. You may do it soon, if you make good use of your time; Mr Tinsel will be here with my Lady at eight, and at nine the conjurer is to take you in hand.

Fant. Let me alone with them both.

Abig. Well! forewarn'd, forearm'd. Get into your box, and I'll endeavour to dispose every thing in your favour.

[*Fantome goes in. Exit Abigal.*
Enter Vellum.

Vcl. Mrs Abigal is withdrawn——I was in hopes to have heard what had pass'd between her and her invisible correspondent.

Enter Tinsel.

Tins. Vellum! Vellum!

Vel. Vellum! we are methinks very familiar; I am not us'd to be call'd so by any but their ho-nours [*aside.*]
—What wou'd you, Mr Tinsel!

Tins. Let me beg a favour of thee, old Gentleman.

Vel. What is that, good Sir?

Tins. Pr'ythee run and fetch me the rent-roll of thy Lady's estate.

Vel. The rent roll!

Tins. The rent-roll? ay, the rent-roll! dost not understand what that means?

Vel. Why? have you any thoughts of purchasing of it?

Tins. Thou hast hit it, old boy, that is my very intention.

Vel. The purchase will be considerable.

Tins. And for that reason I have bid thy Lady very high—she is to have no less for it than this intire person of mine.

Vel. Is your whole estate personal, Mr Tinsel!——
he, he, he!

Tins. Why, you queer old dog, you don't pretend to jest, d'ye! look ye, Vellum, if you think of being continued my steward, you must learn to walk with your toes out.

Vel. An insolent companion! [*aside*]

Tins. Thou'rt confounded rich I see, by that dangling of thy arms.

Vel. An ungracious bird! [*aside.*]

Tins. Thou shalt lend me a couple of thousand pounds.

Vel. A very profligate! [*aside.*]

Tins. Look ye, Vellum, I intend to be kind to you—
I'll borrow some money of you.

Vel. I cannot but smile to consider the disappointment this young fellow will meet with; I will make myself merry with him [*aside.*]—and so, Mr Tinsel, you promise you will be a very kind master to me? [*sisting a laugh.*]

Tins. What will you give for a life in the house you live in?

Vel. What do you think of five hundred pounds? ha, ha, ha!

Tinsf. That's too little.

Vel. And yet it is more than I shall give—and I will offer you two reasons for it.

Tinsf. Pr'ythee what are they!

Vel. First, because the tenement is not in your disposal; and secondly, because it never will be in your disposal; and so fare you well, good Mr Tinsel. Ha, ha, ha! you will pardon me for being jocular. [*Exit Velum.*]

Tinsf. This rogue is as sawey as the conjurer; I'll be hang'd if they are not a kin.

Enter Lady.

Lady. Mr Tinsel! what, all alone? you freethinkers are great admirers of solitude.

Tinsf. No faith, I have been talking with thy steward; a very grotesque figure of a fellow, the very picture of one of our benchers. How can you bear his conversation?

Lady. I keep him for my steward, and not my companion. He's a sober man.

Tinsf. Yes, yes, he looks like a put—a queer old dog, as ever I saw in my life: we must turn him off, widow. He cheats thee confoundedly, I see that.

Lady. Indeed you're mistaken, he has always had the reputation of being a very honest man.

Tinsf. What, I suppose he goes to church.

Lady. Goes to church! so do you too, I hope.

Tinsf. I wou'd for once, widow, to make sure of you.

Lady. Ah, Mr Tinsel, a husband who would not continue to go thither, would quickly forget the promises he made there.

Tinsf. Faith very innocent and very ridiculous! well then, I warrant thee, widow, thou wou'dst not for the world marry a sabbath breaker!

Lady. Truly they generally come to a bad end. I remember the conjurer told you, you were short-liv'd.

Tinsf. The conjurer, ha, ha, ha!

Lady. indeed you're very witty!

Tinsf. Indeed you're very handsome. [*Kisses her hand.*]

Lady. I wish the fool does not love me! [*aside.*]

Tinsf. Thou art the idol I adore. Here must I pay my devotion

devotion——Pr'ythee, widow, hast thou any timber upon thy estate?

Lady. The most impudent fellow I ever met with.

[*aside.*]

Tinsel. I take notice thou hast a great deal of old plate here in the house, widow.

Lady. Mr Tinsel, you are a very observing man.

Tinsel. Thy large silver cistern would make a very good coach; and half a dozen salvers that I saw on the side-board, might be turned into six as pretty horses as any that appear in the ring.

Lady. You have a very good fancy, Mr Tinsel——what pretty transformations you could make in my house—but I'll see where 'twill end.

[*aside.*]

Tinsel. Then I observe, child, you have two or three services of gilt plate; we'd eat always in china, my dear.

Lady. I perceive you are an excellent manager—how quickly you have taken an inventory of my goods!

Tinsel. Now hark ye, widow, to show you the love that I have for you——

Lady. Very well, let me hear.

Tinsel. You have an old fashion'd gold caudle-cup, with the figure of a saint upon the lid on't.

Lady. I have: what then?

Tinsel. Why look ye, I'd sell the caudle-cup, with the old saint, for as much money as they'd fetch, which I wou'd convert into a diamond buckle, and make you a present of it.

Lady. Oh you are generous to an extravagance. But pray, Mr Tinsel, don't dispose of my goods before you are sure of my person. I find you have taken a great affection to my moveables.

Tinsel. My dear I love every thing that belongs to you.

Lady. I see you do, Sir, you need not make any protestations upon that subject.

Tinsel. Pho, pho, my dear, we are growing serious, and let me tell you, that's the very next step to being dull. Come, that pretty face was never made to look grave with.

Lady. Believe me Sir, whatever you may think, marriage is a serious subject.

Tinsel. For that very reason, my dear, let us get over it as fall as we can.

Lady.

Lady. I should be very much in haste for a husband, if I married within fourteen months after Sir George's decease.

Tinsel. Pray my dear, let me ask you a question; do'st not thou think that Sir George is as dead at present, to all intents and purposes, as he will be a twelve month hence?

Lady. Yes, but decency, Mr Tinsel——

Tinsel. Or dost thou think thou'lt be more a widow than thou art now?

Lady. The world, would say I never lov'd my first husband.

Tinsel. Ah, my dear, they would say you lov'd your second; and they wou'd own I deserv'd it, for I shall love thee most inordinately.

Lady. But what wou'd people think?

Tinsel. Think! why they wou'd think thee the mirrour of widowhood——That a woman shou'd live fourteen whole months after the decease of her spouse, without having engaged herself. Why, about town, we know many a woman of quality's second husband several years before the death of the first.

Lady. Ay, I know you wits have your common——place jests upon us poor widows.

Tinsel. I'll tell you a story, widow; I know a certain Lady, who, considering the craziness of her husband, had, in case of mortality, engaged herself to two young fellows of my acquaintance. They grew such desperate rivals for her while her husband was alive, that one of them pink'd the t'other in a duel. But the good Lady was no sooner a widow, but what did my dowager do? why faith, being a woman of honour, she married a third, to whom, it seems, she had given her first promise.

Lady. And this is a true story upon your own knowledge?

Tinsel. Every tittle, as I hope to be marry'd, or never believe Tom Tinsel.

Lady. Pray, Mr Tinsel, do you call this talking like a wit, or like a rake?

Tinsel.

Tinf. Innocent enough, he, he, he ! why ! where's the difference, my dear ?

Lady. Yes, Mr Tinsel, the only man I ever lov'd in my life, had a great deal of the one, and nothing of the other in him.

Tinf. Nay, now you grow vapourish ; thou'lt begin to fancy thou hear'st the drum by and by.

Lady. If you had been here last night about this time, you wou'd not have been so merry.

Tinf. About this time, say'st thou ? come faith, for the humour's sake, we'll sit down and listen.

Lady. I will, if you'll promise to be serious.

Tinf. Serious ! never fear me, child. Ha, ha, ha ! do'it not hear him ?

Lady. You break your word already. Pray, Mr Tinsel, do you laugh to show your wit or your teeth ?

Tinf. Why, both ! my dear — I'm glad however, that she has taken notice of my teeth. [*aside*] But you look serious, child ? I fancy thou hear'st the drum, do'it not ?

Lady. Don't talk so rashly.

Tinf. Why, my dear, you cou'd not look more frighted if you had Lucifer's drum-major in your house.

Lady. Mr Tinsel, I must desire to see you no more in it, if you do not leave this idle way of talking.

Tinf. Child, I thought I had told you what is my opinion of spirits, as we were drinking a dish of tea but just now — There is no such thing, I give thee my word.

Lady. Oh, Mr Tinsel, your authority must be of great weight to those that know you.

Tinf. For my part, child, I have made myself easy in those points.

Lady. Sure nothing was ever like this fellow's vanity, but his ignorance. [*aside*]

Tinf. I'll tell thee what now, widow — I wou'd engage by the help of a white sheet and a penny-worth of hark in a dark night, to frighten you a whole country village out of their senses, and the vicar into the bargain. [*drum beats.*] Hark ! hark ! what noise is that I heaven defend us ! this is more than fancy.

Lady.

Lady. It beats more terrible than ever.

Tins. 'Tis very dreadful! what a dog have I been to speak against my conscience, only to show my parts!

Lady. It comes nearer and nearer. I wish you have not anger'd it by your foolish discourse.

Tins. Indeed, Madam, I did not speak from my heart; I hope it will do me no hurt for a little harmless raillery.

Lady. Harmless, d'ye call it? it beats hard by us, as if it wou'd break through the wall.

Tins. What a devil had I to do with a white sheet?

[*Scene opens, and discovers Fantome.*]

Tins. Mercy on us! it appears.

Lady. Oh! 'tis he! 'tis he himself, 'tis Sir George! 'tis my husband! [*She faints.*]

Tins. Now wou'd I give ten thousand pound that I were in town. [*Fantome advances to him drumming.* I beg ten thousand pardons I'll never talk at this rate any more. [*Fantome still advances drumming.*]

By my soul, Sir George, I was not in earnest (*Falls on his knees*) have compassion on my youth, and consider I am but a coxcomb——(*Fantome points to the door*) But see he waves me off——ay, with all my heart——What a devil had I to do with a white sheet?

(*He steals off the stage, mending his pace as the drum beats.*)

Fant. The scoundrel is gone, and has left his mistress behind him. I'm mistaken if he makes love in this house any more. I have now only the conjurer to deal with. I don't question but I shall make his reverence scamper as fast as the lover. And then the day's my own. But the servants are coming, I must get into my cupboard.

(*He goes in.*)

Enter Abigail and servants.

Abig. O my poor Lady! this wicked drum has frighted Mr. Tinsel out of his wits, and my Lady into a swoon. Let me bend her a little forward. She revives Here, carry her into the fresh air, and she'll recover. (*They carry her off*) This is a little barbarous to my Lady, but 'tis all for her good: and I know her so well, that she wou'd not be angry with me, if she knew what I was to get by it. And if any of her friends shou'd blame me for it hereafter,

I'll

*I'll clap my hand upon my purse, and tell 'em,
'Twas for a thousand pound, and Mr Vellum.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter Sir George in his conjurer's habit, the Butler marching before him with two large candles, and the two servants coming after him; one bringing a little table, and another a chair.

BUTLER.

AN'T please your worship, Mr Conjurer, the Steward has given all of us orders to do whatsoever you shall bid us, and to pay you the same respect, as if you were our master.

Sir Geo. Thou say'st well.

Gard. An't please you Conjurership's worship, shall I set the table down here?

Sir Geo. Here, Peter.

Gard. Peter!—he knows my name by his learning.
[*aside.*]

Coachm. I have brought you, reverend Sir, the largest elbow-chair in the house; 'tis that the Steward sits in when he holds a court.

Sir Geo. Place it there.

Butl. Sir, will you please to want any thing else?

Sir Geo. Paper, and a pen and ink.

Butl. Sir, I believe we have paper that is fit for your purpose! my Lady's mourning paper, that is black'd at the edges—would you chuse to write with a crow quill?

Sir Geo. There is none better.

Butl. Coachman, go fetch the paper and standish out of the little parlour.

Coachm. [*to the Gardiner.*] Peter, pr'ythee do you go along with me—I'm afraid—you know I went with you last night into the garden, when the cook maid wanted a handful of parsley.

Butl. Why, you don't think I'll stay with the Conjurer by myself?

Gard.

Gard. Come we'll all three go and fetch the pen and ink together. (*Exeunt Servants.*)

Sir George solus.

There's nothing, I see, makes such strong alliances as fear. These fellows are all enter'd into a confederacy against the Ghost. There must be abundance of business done in the family at this rate. But here comes the triple alliance. Who cou'd have thought these three rogues cou'd have found each of 'em an employment in fetching a pen and ink !

Enter Gardiner with a sheet of paper, Coachman with a standish, and Butler with a pen.

Gard. Sir, there is your paper.

Coachm. Sir, there is your standish.

Butl. Sir, there is your crow-quill pen ——— I'm glad I have got rid on't. (*aside.*)

Gard. He forgets that he's to make a circle. [*aside.*]
—— Doctor, shall I help you to a bit of chalk ?

Sir Geo. It is no matter.

Butl. Look ye, Sir, I show'd you the spot where he's heard oftenest, if your worship can but ferret him out of that old wall in that next room ———

Sir Geo. We shall try.

Gard. That's right, John. His worship must let fly all his learning at that old wall.

Butl. Sir, if I was worthy to advise you, I wou'd have a bottle of good October by me. Shall I set a cup of old stingo at your elbow ?

Sir Geo. I thank thee, we shall do without it.

Gard. John, he seems a very good natur'd man for a conjurer.

Butl. I'll take this opportunity of enquiring after a bit of plate I have lost. I fancy, whilst he is in my Lady's pay, one may hedge in a question or two into the bargain.
Sir Geo. Sir, may I beg a word in your ear ?

Sir Geo. What wouldst thou ?

Butl. Sir, I know I need not tell you, that I lost one of my silver spoons last week.

Sir Geo. Mark'd with a swan's neck ———

Butl. My Lady's Crest ! He knows every thing.
(*aside.*) How wou'd your worship advise me to recover it again ?

Sir Geo.

Sir Geo. Hum!

Butl. What must I do to come at it?

Sir Geo. Drink nothing but small beer for a fortnight——

Butl. Small-beer! rot gut!

Sir Geo. If thou drink'tt a single drop of ale before fifteen days are expir'd——it is as much——as thy spoon——is worth.

Butl. I shall never recover it that way; I'll e'en buy a new one.

Coachm. D'ye mind how they whisper?

Gard. I'll be hang'd if he be not asking him something about Nell——

Coachm. I'll take this opportunity of putting a question to him about poor Dobbin: I fancy he cou'd give me better counsel than the farrier.

Butl. [to the Gardiner.] A prodigious man! he knows every thing: now is the time to find out thy pick-ax.

Gard. I have nothing to give him. does not he expect to have his hand cross'd with silver?

Coachm. [to Sir George.] Sir, may a man venture to ask you a question.

Sir Geo. Ask it.

Coachm. I have a poor horse in the stable that's bewitch'd——

Sir Geo. A bay gelding.

Coachm. How cou'd he know that?—— [aside.]

Sir Geo. Bought at Banbury.

Coachm. Whew——so it was o' my conscience. [Whistles.]

Sir Geo. Six years old last Lammas.

Coachm. To a day. [Aside.] Now, Sir, I wou'd know whether the poor beast is bewitch'd by Goody Crouch or Goody Flye?

Sir Geo. Neither.

Coachm. Then it must be Goody Gurton! for she is next oldest woman in the parish.

Gard. Hast thou done, Robin?

Coachm. [to the Gardiner.] He can tell thee any thing.

Gard. [to Sir George.] Sir, I would beg to take you a little farther out of hearing——

Sir Geo. Speak.

Gardi.

Gard. The butler and I, Mr Doctor, were both of us in love at the same time with a certain person.

Sir Geo. A woman.

Gard. How could he know that? [*Aside.*]

Sir Geo. Go on.

Gard. This woman has lately had two children at a birth.

Sir Geo. Twins.

Gard. Prodigious! where could he hear that. [*Aside.*]

Sir Geo. Proceed.

Gard. Now because I us'd to meet her sometimes in the garden, she has laid them both——

Sir Geo. To thee.

Gard. What a power of learning he must have; he knows ev'ry thing. [*aside.*]

Sir Geo. Hast thou done?

Gard. I wou'd desire to know whether I am really father to them both?

Sir Geo. Stand before me, let me survey thee round.

[*Lays his wand upon his head, and makes him turn about.*]

Coachm. Look yonder, John, the silly dog is turning about under the conjurer's wand. If he has been saucy to him, we shall see him puff'd off in a whirlwind immediately.

Sir Geo. Twins, dost thou say! [*Still turning him.*]

Gard. Ay; are they both mine d'ye think?

Sir Geo. Own but one of them.

Gard. Ah! but Mrs Abigail will have me take care of them both—she's always for the butler—if my poor master Sir George had been alive, he would have made him go halves with me.

Sir Geo. What, was Sir George a kind master!

Gard. Was he! ay, my fellow-servants will bear me witness.

Sir Geo. Did you love Sir George?

Butl. Every body lov'd him——

Coachm. There was not a dry eye in the parish at the news of his death——

Gard. He was the best neighbour——

Butl. The kindest husband ——

Coachm.

Coachm. The truest friend to the poor——

Bull. My good Lady took on mightily, we all thought it would have been the death of her.

Sir Geo. I protest these fellows melt me! I think the time long till I am their master again, that I may be kind to them. [*aside.*]

Enter Vellum.

Vel. Have you provided the doctor ev'ry thing he had occasion for? if so—you may depart. [*Exeunt Servants.*]

Sir Geo. I can as yet see no hurt in my wife's behaviour; but still have some certain pangs and doubts, that are natural to the heart of a fond man. I must take the advantage of my disguise to be thoroughly satisfied. It would neither be for her happiness, nor mine to make myself known to her till I am so. [*aside.*]—Dear Vellum, I am impatient to hear some news of my wife, how does she after her fright?

Vel. It is a saying somewhere in my Lord Coke, that a widow——

Sir Geo. I ask of my wife, and thou talk'st to me of my Lord Coke—Pr'ythee tell me how she does, for I am in pain for her,

Vel. She is pretty well recover'd. Mrs Abigail has put her in good heart; and I have given her great hopes from your skill.

Sir Geo. That I think cannot fail, since thou hast got this secret out of Abigail. But I could not have thought my friend Fantome would have serv'd me thus——

Vel. You will still fancy you are a living man——

Sir Geo. That he should endeavour to ensnare my wife.

Vel. You have no right in her, after your demise: death extinguishes all property,——*Quod hanc*—it is a maxim in the law.

Sir Geo. A pox on your learning! well, but what is become of Tinsel?

Vel. He rush'd out of the house, call'd for his horse, cl'ap'd spurs to his sides, and was out of sight in less time than I can—tel—ten.

Sir Geo. This is whimsical enough! my wife will have a quick succession of lovers in one day—Fantome has driven out Tinsel, and I shall drive out Fantome.

Vel.

Vel. Ev'n as one wedge driveth out another—he, he; he! you must pardon me for being jocular.

Sir Geo. Was there ever such a provoking blockhead? but he means me well [*aside*] Well! I must have satisfaction of this traitor Fantome; and cannot take a more proper one, than by turning him out of my house, in a manner that shall throw shame upon him, and make him ridiculous as long as he lives——You must remember, Vellum, you have abundance of business upon your hands, and I have but just time to tell it you over; all I require of you is dispatch, therefore hear me.

Vel. There is nothing more requisite in business than dispatch——

Sir Geo. Then hear me.

Vel. It is indeed the life of business——

Sir Geo. Hear me then I say.

Vel. And as one has rightly observed, the benefit that attends it is four-fold. First——

Sir Geo. There is no bearing this! thou art agoing to describe dispatch, when thou should'st be practising it

Vel. But your ho-nour will not give me the hearing——

Sir Geo. Thou wilt not give me the hearing——

[*Angrily.*]

Vel. I am still.

Sir Geo. In the first place, you are to lay my wig, hat, and sword ready for me in the closet; and one of my scarlet coats. You know how Abigail has described the ghost to you.

Vel. It shall be done.

Sir Geo. Then you must remember, whilst I am laying this ghost, you are to prepare my wife for the reception of her real husband; tell her the whole story, and do it with all the art you are master of that the surprize may not be too great for her.

Vel. It shall be done—but since her ho-nour has seen this apparition, she desires to see you once more, before you encounter it:

Sir Geo. I shall expect her impatiently. For now I can talk to her without being interrupted by that impertinent rogue Tinsel. I hope thou hast not told Abigail any thing of the secret.

Vel. Mrs Abigal is a woman; there are many reasons why she should not be acquainted with it: I shall only mention six.——

Sir Geo. Hush, here she comes! oh my heart!

Enter Lady and Abigal.

Sir Geo. [*Aside, while Vellum talks in dumb show to the Lady.*] O that loved woman! how I long to take her into my arms! if I find I am still dear to her memory, it will be a return to life, indeed! but I must take care of indulging this tenderness, and put on a behaviour more suitable to my present character.

[*Walks at a distance in a pensive posture, waving his wand.*

Lady. [*To Vellum*] This is surprising indeed! so all the servants tell me: they say he knows every thing that has happen'd in the family.

Abig. [*aside.*] A parcel of credulous fools! they first tell him their secrets, and then wonder how he comes to know them.

[*Exit. Vellum, exchanging fond looks with Abigal.*

Lady. Learned Sir, may I have some conversation with you, before you begin your ceremonies?

Sir Geo. Speak! but hold—first let me feel your pulse.

Lady. What can you learn from that?

Sir Geo. I have already learned a secret from it, that will astonish you.

Lady. Pray what is it?

Sir Geo. You will have a husband within this half hour.

Abig. [*aside.*] I am glad to hear that—he must mean Mr Fantome; I begin to think there's a great deal of truth in his art.

Lady. Alas! I fear you mean I shall see Sir George's apparition a second time.

Sir Geo. Have courage you shall see the apparition no more. The husband I mention shall be as much alive as I am.

Abig. Mr Fantome to be sure.

[*aside*

Lady. Impossible! I lov'd my first too well.

Sir Geo. You could not love the first better than you will love the second.

Abig.

Abig. [*aside.*] I'll be hang'd if my dear steward has not instructed him; he means Mr Fantome to be sure; the thousand pound is our own!

Lady. Alas! you did not know Sir George.

Sir Geo. As well as I do myself——I saw him with you in the red damask room, when he first made love to you; your mother left you together, under pretence of receiving a visit from Mrs Hawthorn, on her return from London.

Lady. This is astonishing!

Sir Geo. You were a great admirer of a single life for the first half hour; your refusals then grew still fainter and fainter. With what extasy did Sir George kiss your hand, when you told him you should always follow the advice of your Mamma!

Lady. Every circumstance to a tittle.

Sir Geo. Then Lady! the wedding night! I saw you in your white fatten night-gown; you would not come out of your dressing room, till Sir George took you out by force. He drew you gently by the hand—you struggled—but he was too strong for you—you blushed, he—

Lady. Oh! stop there! go no further—he knows every thing. [*aside.*]

Abig. Truly, Mr Conjuror, I believe you have been a wag in your youth.

Sir Geo. Mrs-Abigail, you know what your good-word cost Sir George, a purse of broad pieces, Mrs Abigail——

Abig. The Devil's in him. [*aside.*] Pray Sir, since you have told so far, you should tell my Lady that I refused to take them.

Sir Geo. 'Tis true; child, he was forced to thrust them into your bosom.

Abig. This rogue will mention the thousand pounds, if I don't take care, [*aside.*] Pray, Sir, though you are a Conjuror, methinks you need not be a blab——

Lady. Sir, since I have now no reason to doubt of your art, I must beseech you to treat this apparition gently—it has the resemblance of my deceas'd husband; if there be any undiscover'd secret, any thing that troubles his rest, learn it of him.

Sir Geo. I must to that end be sincerely informed by

you, whether your heart be engaged to another; have you not received the addresses of many lovers since his death.

Lady. I have been obliged to receive more visits, than have been agreeable.

Sir Geo. Was not Tinsel welcome?—I am afraid to hear an answer to my own question [*aside.*]

Lady. He was well recommended.

Sir Geo. Racks!

Lady. Of a good family.

Sir Geo. Tortures!

Lady. Heir to a considerable estate.

Sir Geo. Death. [*aside*] And you still love him?—
I'm distracted!

Lady. No, I despise him. I found he had a design upon my fortune, was base, profligate, cowardly, and every thing that cou'd be expected from a man of the vilest principles—

Sir Geo. I am recover'd. [*aside.*]

Abig. Oh, Madam, had you seen how like a scoundrel he look'd when he left your Ladyship in a swoon. Where have you left my Lady? says I. In an elbow chair, says he: and where are you going? says I. To town, child, says he, for to tell thee truly, child, says he, I don't care for living under the same roof with the devil, says he.

Sir Geo. Well, Lady, I see nothing in all this that may hinder Sir George's spirit from being at rest.

Lady. If he knows any thing of what passes in my heart, he cannot but be satisfy'd of that fondness which I bear to his memory. My sorrow for him is always fresh when I think of him. He was the kindest, truest, tenderest—Tears will not let me go on—

Sir Geo. This quite o'erpowers me— I shall discover myself before my time. [*aside.*]—Madam, you may now retire and leave me to myself.

Lady. Success attend you!

Abig. I wish Mr Fantome gets well off from this old Don——I know he'll be with him immediately.

[*Exeunt Lady and Abigail.*]

Sir George solus.

Sir Geo. My heart is now at ease, she is the same dear

woman I left her—now for my revenge upon Fantome—I shall cut the ceremonies short—a few words will do his business—now let me seat myself in form—a good easy chair for a conjurer this!—now for a few mathematical scratches—a good lucky scrawl, that—faith I think it looks very astrological—these two or three magical pot-hooks about it, make it a compleat conjurer's scheme. [*Drum beats.*] Ha, ha, ha, Sir, are you there? enter, drummer. Now I must pore upon my paper.

Enter Fantome beating the drum.

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee don't make a noise, I'm busy.

[*Fantome beats.*

A pretty march? pr'ythee beat that over again.

[*He beats and advances.*

Sir Geo. [*Rising*] Ha! you're very perfect in the step of a ghost. You stalk it majestically. [*Fantome advances.*

How the rogue stares! he acts it to admiration! I'll be hang'd if he has not been practising this half hour in Mrs Abigail's wardrobe.

[*Fantome starts, and gives a rap upon his drum.*

Pr'ythee don't play the fool! [*Fantome beats.*

Nay, nay, enough of this, good Mr Fantome.

Fant. [*Aside*] Death! I'm discovered. This jade Abigail has betray'd me.

Sir Geo. Mr Fantome, upon the word of an Astrologer, your thousand pound bribe will never gain my Lady Trueman.

Fant. 'Tis plain she has told him all. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. Let me advise you to make off as fast as you can, or I plainly perceive by my art, Mr Ghost will have his bones broke.

Fant. [*to Sir George*] Look ye, old Gentleman, I perceive you have learn'd this secret from Mrs Abigail.

Sir Geo. I have learnt it from my art.

Fant. Thy art! pr'ythee no more of that. Look ye, I know you are a cheat as much as I am. And if thou will keep my counsel, I'll give the ten broad pieces.—

Sir Geo. I am not mercenary! young man, I scorn thy gold.

Fant. I'll make them up twenty——

Sir Geo. Avaunt! and that quickly, or I'll raise such apparition, as shall——

Fant

Fant. An apparition, old Gentleman! you mistake your man, I am not to be frighted with bugbears——

Sir Geo. Let me retire but for a few moments, and I will give thee such a proof of my art——

Fant. Why, if thou hast any *hocus pocus* tricks to play, why can't not do them here?

Sir Geo. The raising of a spirit requires certain secret mysteries to be performed, and words to be mutter'd in private——

Fant. Well, if I see through your trick, you will promise to be my friend!

Sir Geo. I will, attend and tremble.

[*Exit.*

Fantome solus.

Fant. A very solemn old ass! but I smoke him,—he has a mind to raise his price upon me. I could not think this flat would have used me thus—I begin to be horribly tir'd of my drum, I wish I was well rid of it. However I have got this by it, that it has driven off Tinsel for good and all; I shan't have the mortification to see my mistress carry'd off by such a rival. Well whatever happens, I must stop this old fellow's mouth, I must not be sparing in hush-money. But here he comes.

Enter Sir George in his own habit.

Fant. Ha! what's that! Sir George Trueman! This can be no counterfeit. His dress! his shape! his face! the very wound of which he dy'd! nay, then 'tis time to decamp!

[*Runs off.*

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, ha! Fare you well, good Sir George. ——the enemy has left me master of the field: here are the marks of my victory. This drum will I hang up in my great hall as the trophy of the day.

Enter Abigail.

[*Sir George stands with his hand before his face in a musing posture.*

Abig. Yonder he is. O my conscience he has driven off the conjurer. Mr Fantome, Mr Fantome! I give you joy, I give you joy. What do you think of your thousand pounds now! Why does not the man speak?

[*Pulls him by the sleeve.*

Sir Geo. Ha!

[*Taking his hand from his face.*

Abig. Oh! 'tis my master!

[*Starts.*

[*Running away, he catches her.*

F

Sir Geo.

Sir Geo. Good Mrs Abigal, not so fast.

Abig. Are you alive, Sir? — He has given my shoulder such a cursed tweak! they must be real fingers. I feel 'em I'm sure.

Sir Geo. What dost think?

Abig. Think, Sir, think? troth I don't know what to think. Pray, Sir, how—

Sir Geo. No questions, good Abigal. Thy curiosity shall be satisfied in due time. Where's your Lady?

Abig. Oh, I'm so frighted—and so glad!

Sir Geo. Where's your Lady, I ask you—

Abig. Marry I don't know where I am myself—I can't forbear weeping for joy—

Sir Geo. Your Lady, I say your Lady! I must bring you to yourself with one pinch more—

Abig. Oh! she has been talking a good while with the steward

Sir Geo. Then he has open'd the whole story to her, I'm glad he has prepared her. Oh! here she comes.

Enter Lady follow'd by Vellum.

Lady. Where is he? let me fly into his arms! my life! my soul! my husband!

Sir Geo. Oh! let me catch thee to my heart, dearest of women.

Lady. Are you then still alive, and are you here! I can scarce believe my senses! now am I happy indeed!

Sir Geo. My heart is too full to answer thee.

Lady. How could you be so cruel to defer giving me that joy which you know I must receive from your presence? you have robb'd my life of some hours of happiness that ought to have been in it.

Sir Geo. It was to make our happiness the more sincere and unmixt. There will be now no doubts to dash it. What has been the affliction of our lives, has given a variety to them, and will hereafter supply us with a thousand materials to talk of.

Lady. I am now satisfy'd that it is not in the power of absence to lessen your love towards me.

Sir Geo. And I am satisfy'd that it is not in the power of death to destroy that love which makes me the happiest of men.

Lady.

Lady. Was ever woman so blest ! to find again the darling of her soul, when she thought him lost for ever ! to enter into a kind of second marriage with the only man whom she was ever capable of loving !

Sir Geo. May it be as happy as our first, I desire no more ! believe me, my dear, I want words to express those transports of joy and tenderness which are every moment rising in my heart whilst I speak to thee.

Enter Servants.

Butl. Just as the steward told us, lads ! look you there, if he ben't with my Lady already.

Gard. He ! he ! he ! what a joyful night will this be for Madam !

Coachm. As I was coming in at the gate, a strange gentleman whisk'd by me ; but he took to his heels, and made way to the *George*. If I did not see master before, I should have sworn it had been his honour.

Gard. Hast given orders for the bells to be set a ringing ?

Coachm. Never trouble thy head about that, 'tis done.

Sir Geo. [*to Lady*] My dear, I long as much to tell you my whole story, as you do to hear it. In the mean while I am to look upon this as my wedding day. I'll have nothing but the voice of mirth and feasting in my house. My poor neighbours and my servants shall rejoice with me. My hall shall be free to every one, and let my cellars be thrown open.

Butl. Ah ! bless your honour, may you never die again !

Coachm. The same good man that ever he was.

Gard. Whurra !

Sir Geo. Vellum, thou hast done me much service to-day, I know thou lov'st Abigail, but she's disappointed in a fortune. I'll make it up to both of you. I'll give thee a thousand pound with her. It is not fit there shou'd be one sad heart in my house to-night.

Lady. What you do for Abigail, I know is meant as a compliment to me. This is a new instance of your love.

Abig. Mr Vellum, you are a well spoken man : pray do you thank my Master and my Lady.

Sir Geo.

*Sir Geo. Vellum, I hope you are not displeas'd with
the gift I make.*

VELLUM.

*The gift is two-fold. I receive from you
The virtuous partner, and a portion too ;
For which, in humble wise, I thank the donors :
And so we bid good night to both your ho-nours.*

THE

THE
EPILOGUE.

Spoke by Mrs OLDFIELD.

TO-night the poet's advocate I stand,
And he deserves the favour at my hand,
Who in my equipage their cause debating;
Has plac'd two lovers, and a third in waiting;
If both the first shou'd from their duty swerve,
There's one behind the wainscot in reserve.
In his next play, if I wou'd take this trouble,
He promis'd me to make the number double:
In troth 'twas spoke like an obliging creature,
For tho', 'tis simple, yet it shews good nature.

My help thus ask'd, I cou'd not chuse but grant it,
And really I thought the play wou'd want it,
Void as it is of all the usual arts
To warm your fancies, and to steal your hearts:
No court-intrigue, no city cuckoldom,
No song, no dance, no music—but a drum—
No smutty thought in doubtful phrase exprest;
And, Gentlemen, if so, pray where's the jest?
When we wou'd raise your mirth, you hardly know
Whether in strictness you shou'd laugh or no.
But turn upon the Ladies in the pit,
And if they redden, you are sure 'tis wit.

PROTECT him, then, ye fair ones; for the fair
Of all conditions are his equal care.
He draws a widow, who, of blameless carriage,
True to her jointure, hates a second marriage;
And to improve a virtuous wife's delights,
Out of one man contrives two wedding nights.
Nay, to oblige the sex in ev'ry state,
A nymph of five and forty finds her mate.

Too long has marriage, in this tasteless age,
With ill-bred rallery supply'd the stage;
No little scribler is of wit so bare,
But has his sling at the poor wedded pair.

EPILOGUE.

Our author deals not in conceits so stale :
For shou'd th' examples of his play prevail,
No man need blush, tho' true to marriage vows,
Nor be a jest tho' he shou'd love his spouse.
Thus has he done you British consorts right,
Whose husbands, shou'd they pry like mine to-night,
Wou'd never find you in your conduct slipping,
Tho' they turned conjurers to take you tripping.

F I N I S.















